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## STONE ARRANGEMENTS AT CANNA, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

By V. N. SERVENTY and S. R. WHITE.

Published records of Australian native stone arrangements are not numerous and there is little recorded material from Western Australian Wheatbelt areas, though one at Pithara is described and illustrated by Glauert (1952). Nearer the coast a "circle of stones" reported by a surveyor in 1875 south of Dongara aroused popular interest in the belief it marked the site of treasure buried by shipwrecked Dutch mariners in the 17th Century. An account of the searches for this circle and its supposed associated riches is given by Malcolm Uren (1940, p. 37 *et seq.*).

### SITUATION

The main southward road from Mullewa to Morawa traverses an area between the 26 mile peg and the 35 mile peg which is liberally dotted with old native watering sites. One may observe among the localities on standard Lands Department lithographs, in the vicinity of Pindawa, such names as "Wandonoe Spring," "Muggawogga Spring," "Thoorangery Spring," and captions such as "Rock-hole . . . water . . . fresh," "Well . . . fresh," etc., indicating that hereabouts, because of the limited water supplies in adjoining areas, was a concentration of native camps. In the vicinity of these waters it is not unusual to discover native grinding stones, mortars and other artefacts. A similar association of native artefacts with a series of springs at Yandanooka, 30 miles to the south-west, has been described by Baker (1953).

As one passes the 35 mile peg a series of red-brown granite tors, a mile or so to the east, catches the eye; a prominent outcrop in a relatively featureless and low, undulating landscape. It is in this area, immediately north of the granite tors and between the main road and the railway line, that the native stone arrangements listed in the following descriptions were observed.

The entire area over which the arrangements are scattered consists of gneissic granite formation with a general fall to the west. There are a number of intermittently-flowing watercourses, the beds of which are filled with broken stones. Low scrub about two feet high covers loose broken stone and earth. Only along the gullies and on the downhill fringes of bald rock, where some depth of soil holds the moisture, is there a dense plant growth of up to eight or nine feet.

The conspicuous natural monoliths are a feature, visible from some distance. Most outstanding is a tall needle of rock which stands alone, overlooking a considerable flat expanse of low scrub. In this flat lie extensive areas of bald rock visible only on close approach, and it is along these almost flat and bare surfaces that the stone arrangements have been composed. The granite needle in itself is of particular interest and it is felt by the authors that its peculiar shape and position may have been the significant contribution which led to the selection of this site by the natives for the arrangements. Some ten feet high, it is surmounted by a boulder of the same material. Its phallic likeness is very apparent from the illustration (Fig. 1).

#### HISTORY

In 1952 one of us (S.R.W.) then living in Morawa was informed by Mr. M. Schuler, the Headmaster of Canna School, that while hunting wild goats he had discovered a number of stones arranged in lines and circles. He felt certain these stones had been placed in position by human hands.

The first visit to the locality was made with Mr. Schuler acting as guide. Sufficient was seen to encourage further visits and several were made over the next two years. Almost every area of exposed flat rock surface yielded some evidence of having been the site of stone arrangements.



Fig. 1.—Granite needle.

—Photo V. N. Serventy.

For the purpose of preparing a record in some detail two excursions were made to the area by both of us working together. The first was on May 10, 1953, the second on August 16, 1953. Preliminary recording of other stone arrangements in the Morawa areas was also made and these will be the subject of a later paper.

#### METHOD USED IN RECORDING

A number of the smaller arrangements were sketched by the method of pacing and were then noted directly into the field record. The large stone arrangement for which a complete map was compiled shows the main outline as solid lines. It was plotted by using a prismatic compass and chain tape. A straight chalk line was run across the base rock, through the arrangement and along its greatest distance. The base rock was then divided into squares measuring 10 yards by 10 yards. Paper sheets ruled into half inch squares were then used to plot the arrangements. A final sealing down was done on the drawing board from the field notes and diagrams.

#### STONE ARRANGEMENTS

Most of the stone arrangements were clearly defined but some appeared to be disturbed by the removal of stone fragments. These could have been used by the builders, renovating, improving or laying subsequent patterns. The stones varied from the size of a large orange to slabs and fragments up to a foot long.



Fig. 2—A section of the main arena, showing in the background the barrier of piled rock fragments.

—Photo V. N. Serventy



Fig. 3.—Map of the main arena, showing (in heavy lines) the arrangements of stones; the dotted line defines the extent of the arena. A indicates the location of the vertical slabs, illustrated in Fig. 5.



The patterns usually consisted of strings of stone fragments arranged in lines roughly parallel and joined at the western ends by a semi-circle or loop. There were numerous deviations and combinations of this theme, but the overall impression of the figure is typical (Fig. 3).

Circles from eighteen inches up to five or six feet in diameter were common. These occurred as isolated units; as figures adjacent to one another or to the lines of stones, or connected to a single short line of stones. H. M. Cooper (1941) describes a somewhat similar circle of stones from Marree, South Australia, though in this case the two circles had a low heap of stones in the middle and the circles were connected by a line of pebbles forty feet in length.

#### **Encircled Pattern**

One well preserved circle of stones about eighteen inches across enclosed a conspicuous mark on the rock surface (Fig. 4). Whether this pattern was a natural part of the rock and enclosed because of its significance, or whether it was due to external application of some substance, which by covering the rock from the weather, thereby protected it from stain, we were unable to decide. In appearance this portion of the rock surface was considerably lighter in colour than its immediate surroundings.



Fig. 4.—Encircled pattern.

—Photo S. R. White

### Stone Slab Arrangements

At the extreme southern end of the large arena figured and on its western side an entirely different type of arrangement was found. One other similar construction pattern had been noted by one of us (S.R.W.) some 12 miles east of Morawa. On this side of the bald rock there was a considerable deposit of soil. Along it a series of fourteen stone slabs formed a line eight feet long. Three slabs, the tallest of which projected twelve inches above the ground level, were standing. The remainder lay flat, some partly buried in soil but their appearance indicated they had fallen from a vertical position (Fig. 5).

### Phallic Theme

Another remarkable design is shown in Fig 6. The site of this construction was a smaller and somewhat isolated bald rock within a few hundred yards of the natural "needle" to which reference has been made. The figure also has a phallic likeness.

### Bald Rock Arenas

The bald rocks themselves possess interesting physical features. Their orientation is generally along a north-south axis. The eastern or elevated sides are fringed with barriers of piled rock fragments (Fig. 2), apparently the result of some natural physical process. There are however along these ramparts numerous depressions about four or five feet across and up to three feet deep which have the appearance of having been constructed by human hands. They face the open ends of the loops of stones shown in Fig. 3.

### TYPES OF STONE ARRANGEMENTS

F. D. McCarthy (1940) gives a summary of the types of stone arrangements found in Australia. He lists the following.

1. Fish traps.
2. Monoliths.
3. Heaps and cairns.
4. Circles and lines of stones.
5. Elaborate arrangements which combine (2) to (4).

Lindsay Black (1950) discusses similar arrangements at some length, particularly those in western New South Wales. Both these authors emphasise the wide variety of origin of stone arrangements and the difficulty of interpretation unless the original users can be interviewed. In the case described this is no longer possible. The original inhabitants (of the Widi tribe) have died out and the natives now to be found in the area have moved there in recent times from places further east (personal communication to R. M. Berndt by Miss R. Finke). The arrangements do fall into the territory which is recorded as a circumscription area by Tindale (1940).

### CONCLUSION

Not all the stone arrangements in this area were plotted in detail and a complete locality plan of the arenas was not compiled. This would be ideally carried out by means of aerial photo-



Fig. 5.—Vertical slabs; the two at the left have fallen.

—Photo S. R. White.

graphy. Although the area is conspicuously marked with the granite tors and adjacent to the main road, rough walking over loose stones and the thick scrub would deter the average picnic party. As the site offers no scope for agriculture and little inducement for grazing the stones may long remain undisturbed.

Later when sufficient data has been obtained an attempt may be made to determine the significance of these arrangements in native life and their relationship to similar occurrences in other parts of the world. Although Australia possesses a large number of these features, since they lack any very large stones, these excite little interest from the average observer. Yet to the anthropologist they possess a value and it is important all such should be accurately recorded. If possible they should also be declared national parks because of their interest as one of the few tangible records left by Australia's earlier human inhabitants.

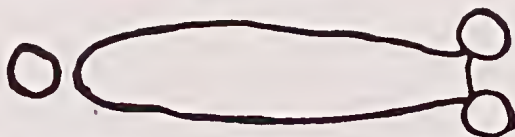


Fig. 6.—A stone design on one of the smaller arenas.



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## THE INTRODUCED TURTLEDOVES IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

By ERIC H. SEDGWICK, Collic.

### PART I

#### ORIGIN OF THE INQUIRY

Having observed Turtledoves in several localities from which they had not previously been recorded, L. E. Sedgwick submitted a note for publication in the *W.A. Naturalist*. It was then suggested that an inquiry be conducted to supplement the observations recorded in this note, so requests for further information on the species were circulated.

The following observers contributed material and will, hereafter, be identified by their initials only:

Don Calderwood (D.N.C.)  
C. H. F. Jenkins (C.H.F.J.)  
V. F. McDougall (V.F.McD.)  
Eric H. Sedgwick (E.H.S.)  
L. E. Sedgwick (L.E.S.)  
D. L. Serventy (D.L.S.)  
V. N. Serventy (V.N.S.)  
Peter Slater (P.S.)  
G. M. Storr (G.M.S.)  
B. V. Teague (B.V.T.)  
John Warham (J.W.)

As it happened, the Gould League of Western Australia had just previously (1955) initiated an inquiry into the distribution of the turtledoves, the results of which have been made available.

In addition, both Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. and the Fisheries Department have freely contributed valuable information.

In view of the sudden passing of one of the contributors, Brian Teague, at the time that this paper was being completed, it appears fitting to draw special attention to the very many meticulous field notes which appear under his name and particularly to his well-considered hypotheses relating to the nature of the spread of the Senegal Turtledove.